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AUTHOR Pang, K. C.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the initial and inservice education of teachers in Hong Kong, and explores improving teacher education in the context of a changing era. According to the Basic Law for the future Hong Kong Government after China takes over in 1997, Hong Kong will not dispose of the existing educational system, but will build on it and continue it. For primary and junior secondary teachers, initial teacher education is mainly by preservice studies. Secondary five or secondary seven school graduates pursue a full-time course leading to a Certificate in Primary or Secondary Education. For senior secondary and sixth form teachers, initial teacher education is offered by the Faculty of Education of the universities. Inservice Teacher Education in Hong Kong is described, including award-bearing provisions, non-awarding-bearing provisions, and school-based provisions. Current developments in teacher education are discussed, as well as expectations beyond 1997. Emphasis on teacher education in Hong Kong has traditionally been on initial education, focusing primarily on developing teachers' capabilities in implementing the centrally developed curricula, and has been viewed mainly as the role of universities and colleges. It is expected that recent changes will lead to significant improvements. Further, developments in teacher education in Hong Kong will have an impact on China as well, including establishment of the Hong Kong Institute of Education as a major teacher education institution and upgrading the quality of primary school and kindergarten teachers. Details of teacher education programs are outlined, including areas of improvement, modularization and credit-bearing courses, and a wider variety of degree courses. (ND)

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DEVELOPMENTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN HONG KONG: 1997 AND BEYOND

Dr. K.C. Pang, Deputy Director
The Hong Kong Institution of Education

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I. Introduction

The teaching profession in Hong Kong consists of both graduate and non-graduate teachers. Traditionally, teachers in kindergartens, primary schools and in the junior secondary levels (secondary 1-3) are non-graduates, while teachers in the senior secondary levels (secondary 4-5) and in the sixth form (secondary 6 and 7) are graduates.

This paper first provides the background to the initial and in-service education of teachers in Hong Kong, and then introduces developments in improving teacher education in the context of a changing era.

II. Initial Teacher Education in Hong Kong

Initial education of teachers in Hong Kong is provided by a number of institutions. The former Colleges of Education provide initial education of non-graduate teachers for kindergartens, primary schools and the junior secondary levels of schooling, whilst the Faculty of Education of the universities provides initial education for university graduates for the senior secondary and sixth form levels of schooling.

Up till the present moment, not all teachers are trained. For kindergartens, secondary three or secondary five graduates joined the profession and then receive initial teacher education whilst they are in-service through courses offered by the former Colleges of Education. These courses are of two types, namely, the QAKT (Qualified Assistant Kindergarten Teachers) course of 16-week part-time study for secondary three graduates and the QKT (Qualified Kindergarten Teachers) course of 2-year part-time study for secondary five graduates. About 50% of the kindergarten teachers are trained.

For primary and junior secondary teachers, initial teacher education is mainly by pre-service studies. Secondary five or secondary seven school graduates pursue a full-time course leading to a Certificate in Primary or Secondary Education. The course for secondary seven graduates is 2-year in duration, whilst secondary five graduates have to first pursue a preparation year course before joining the same two-year course. Most primary and junior secondary teachers are trained before they entered the profession. For the untrained

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teachers, they have the option of studying for a part-time initial teacher education course of 2-3 years duration whilst they are in-service. At present, about 90% of these non-graduate teachers are trained.

For senior secondary and sixth form teachers, initial teacher education is offered by the Faculty of Education of the universities. Teachers in this sector are all graduates. The government does not yet have a mandatory training requirement for entry into the profession. Some graduates first undertake a one-year full-time pre-service Postgraduate Certificate in Education/Diploma in Education course at university immediately after their undergraduate studies before they enter the profession as trained teachers. Other freshmen joined the profession without training, and then complete the same courses through 2-year part-time study whilst they are teaching. At present, about 70% of the teachers are trained.

III. In-service Teacher Education in Hong Kong

A. Award-bearing provisions

Both award-bearing and non-award-bearing in-service education opportunities are provided for Hong Kong teachers. Though the provisions have significantly increased in the last few years as compared with the past, the overall provision is still relatively inadequate for the over 40,000 teachers in Hong Kong and when compared with the in-service provisions in major overseas countries.

Formal Award-bearing provisions are provided by the Faculty of Education of the universities. These include part-time Master of Education studies in a range of areas including curriculum studies, school administration and management, guidance and counselling, pre-school education, educational psychology, teacher education, studies of national systems, special education, physical education etc. Research degrees (M.Phil. and Ph.D.) are also available both by full-time and part-time studies.

Recently, B.Ed. degrees are also offered by the universities for College of Education certificate graduates to upgrade them to degree status. Both 2-year full-time and four-year part-time courses are available. In addition, B.Ed. degrees by distance-learning have also been recently introduced as a result of the government's support through an inducement grant to interested institutions, including the Opening Learning Institute. Most of these courses are for primary school teachers, to couple with the government's recent policy of introducing graduate posts in the primary sector. The target is a 35% graduate population in primary schools by 2007, to be achieved in 15 years since 1992. These degree opportunities by part-time studies for in-service primary teachers will augment the all non-graduate situation in primary schools. Apart from these local provisions, in recent years there is an increasing number of non-graduate teachers going overseas, especially to the U.K., for B.Ed. or B.A.(Ed) studies. Before the abovementioned local B.Ed. degrees are turning out graduates for the primary schools, there is already now over 800 bachelor degree graduates returned from overseas studies teaching in primary schools. This has helped in increasing the proportion of graduates in the primary sector.

B. Non-award-bearing central provisions

Regarding non-award-bearing in-service provisions, a variety of organizations are providing in-service education for teachers to support their professional development.

The former Colleges of Education offer a range of in-service courses for primary and secondary school teachers. These include refresher training courses, advanced courses for bringing junior secondary school teachers to teach senior secondary levels, courses to convert normal school teachers to teach in special schools, and a variety of short courses on different topics. The Institute for Language in Education (ILE) offers a range of language and language in education in-service courses for primary and secondary school teachers. The universities also offer a range of in-service courses, to update knowledge and retrain skills, to introduce new methods, skills, strategies and innovations, to support new curricula, to promote action research and to support the professional development of teachers. The Education Department, through its Advisory Inspectorate and Curriculum Development Institute, also offer a whole range of seminars, workshops and short courses for teachers. Numerous professional teacher associations and related organizations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, Family Planning Association, and Independent Commission Against Corruption also offer workshops, seminars and courses for teachers.

C. School-based provisions

Apart from the above out-of-school central provisions, the universities also provide some support to schools in their school-based INSET and induction work, which is getting more popular among Hong Kong schools. These are in the form of lecturers going into schools offering special programmes, or lecturers working with schools in developing and implementing their own programmes on areas of their special needs.

The Curriculum Development Institute, in implementing new curricula, also provide some school-based in-service programmes for teachers at their own schools. Some are to introduce newly developed central curricula (such as the Target Oriented Curriculum). Others are to assist schools in developing curriculum innovations, whilst providing teacher education at the same time (e.g. the initiative to help schools to achieve curriculum integration).

Individual lecturers also accept schools' invitations to give professional development seminars and workshops on an individual basis, and to provide induction and INSET consultancy services as necessary.

III. Developments in teacher education in Hong Kong:
Current developments and beyond 1997

Emphasis on teacher education in Hong Kong as outlined above has traditionally been on initial education. Teacher education is mainly conceived of as pre-service education and

government resources have mainly been directed to pre-service courses offered by the Colleges of Education and the Faculty of Education of universities. In terms of the triple-i model of teacher education (initial-induction-in-service), much more resources would need to be provided for supporting and developing induction and in-service provisions to achieve comprehensive and balanced teacher education provisions.

In addition, teacher education in Hong Kong in the past has focussed more on developing teachers' capabilities in implementing the centrally developed curricula. Concerns have mostly been placed on application of theory into practice. Teaching practice are more for developing and reinforcing skills. It has been referred to as teacher training.

Teacher education has in the past been mainly viewed as the role of universities and colleges. Schools and the Education Department do not have a direct role. Most schools perceive their role in teaching practice as providing placement opportunities for students to practise their skills.

It is, however, encouraging to note that much changes have been taking place in the past few years which will certainly lead to significant improvements in teacher education in Hong Kong. Though these initiatives are part of the ongoing attempts in improvements and innovations, and are not initiated due to the 1997 issue, they will, nevertheless, bring about better provisions for Hong Kong for the post 1997 period.

According to the Basic Law for the future Hong Kong Government after China takes over in 1997, Hong Kong will not dispose of the existing educational system, but will build on it and continue to improve it. China leaders have also made it clear that no changes to Hong Kong will be imposed by China for at least 50 years. Hence, no drastic changes to teacher education are expected because of the coming of 1997. Any changes are mainly due to the ongoing quest for improvements.

Though the 1997 issue does not directly lead to changes, some changes do take place indirectly as a consequence. The fact that China will take over Hong Kong in 1997, and that Hong Kong will become part of China have in these few years led to much more interactions between Hong Kong and China. There has been an obvious shift of the production base of many Hong Kong manufacturers to South East China to rely on the cheaper labour there, and Hong Kong's economy is now more dependent on China. In the educational front, there are now more exchanges between educators and teacher educators of China and Hong Kong.

Indeed, due to Hong Kong's international connections and exposure, Hong Kong's role in bringing in overseas innovations and maintaining international links for China has become more important as it approaches 1997. For teacher education, developments in Hong Kong's teacher education will therefore not only have an impact on Hong Kong, but will have wider and longer term impacts on improving China's teacher's education as well because of the takeover.

IV. System-wide developments

Against the above background, the major current developments in teacher education are described below.

A. Establishment of a major teacher education institution

The Hong Kong Education Commission, in its fifth report (ECR5, 1992), recommended the establishment of The Hong Kong Institute of Education as a major teacher education institution in Hong Kong, by amalgamating and upgrading the existing colleges of education and the Institute of Language in Education. With an academic staff size of over 500, and a student population of over 9000 full-time and part-time students, this institute will develop into a centre of excellence in teacher education and continuous professional development for teachers in Hong Kong. It will strive towards the provision of comprehensive and balanced teacher education for Hong Kong, to make up for the shortfalls in the existing provisions. The Institute will upgrade itself, and will provide degree studies at all levels, from B.Ed, postgraduate diplomas to M.Ed., M.Phil. and eventually Ph.D. programmes. The Institute will also emphasize on the provision of quality and effective programmes, based on sound theoretical foundations, research results and contemporary thinking on teacher education. Apart from award-bearing programmes, the Institute will develop a whole range of non-award-bearing induction and in-service programmes and activities to support teachers in their professional development. These will also include school-based work and consultancy services. The Institute will be provided with a purpose-built campus by 1997, with latest and advanced facilities for teaching, research, education technology and learning support. The institute will also develop its international exchange facilities. It is expected that it will not only enhance teacher education locally, but should also play a role in introducing innovations to China as mentioned in the last section, through its exchanges and collaborative efforts with teacher education institutions in China.

B. Upgrading the qualifications of primary school teachers

Traditionally, teachers in this sector are non-graduates who have gone through a 2-3 years post-secondary study in a college of education. The government, in accepting the recommendations of the ECR5, has adopted the policy of a 35% graduate target for primary schools by 2007. Universities and the new Hong Kong Institute of Education have been asked to mount B.Ed. programmes for school leavers and in-service non-graduate teachers to achieve this goal. Special funding has also been given to facilitate the development of distance-learning B.Ed. programmes.

C. Upgrading kindergarten teacher education

As described previously, kindergarten teacher education has been inferior to that for primary and secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. The Government has recently channelled funding to improve kindergarten teacher education. Additional courses will be

offered to speed up the percentage of trained teachers, and new courses are introduced to upgrade the teachers with minimum training (QAKT) to more acceptable standards (QKT) through "Top-up" courses, and to bring teacher education for kindergarten teachers to be on par with their primary and secondary counterparts through new certificate courses. In future, degree courses are expected to be mounted for teachers in this sector as well.

V. Programme developments

A. Special emphasis in programme development

Teacher educators in different Hong Kong Institutes are now giving increasing attention to the following areas in improving their programmes:

1. Integration between theory and practice
2. Development of Reflective Practice
3. Emphasis on pedagogical content knowledge
4. Partnership with schools

Often, the practicum and practicum related seminars and workshops are given an important role in achieving the above.

An example of these changes is illustrated by the new Certificate in Education programme of the Hong Kong Institute of Education as shown in the appendix.

B. Modularization and credit-bearing courses

Modularization and credit-earning is becoming another major feature to allow more flexibility and to enhance attractiveness of courses.

C. Wider variety of award-bearing programmes

The teacher education institutions in Hong Kong are developing a wide range of programmes for teachers in both the pre-service and in-service phases. A variety of programmes are now being developed, including

B.Ed.
PGCE/PGDE/Dip. Ed.
M.Ed.
M.Phil.
Ph.D.

Further courses such as Ed.D.may also be developed in due course.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Hong Kong's teacher education is undergoing rapid changes and improvements. Though this is not directly caused by the coming of 1997, these improvements will certainly benefit Hong Kong's transition into the new era. Establishment of the new Hong Kong Institute of Education shows government's commitment in teacher education, and marks a new era in the history of teacher education in Hong Kong. With an academic staff of over 500, and a purpose-built campus for teacher education, the Institute has tremendous potentials in enriching and enhancing teacher education in Hong Kong in all phases of teachers education, as well as in bringing in innovations to China to assist its teacher education and education developments as the relations between Hong Kong and China become much more closer with the coming of 1997.

Bibliography

ECR5 (1992). Education Commission Report No.5. Hong Kong Government

Curriculum Structure of the 2-year Certificate in Primary Education Course **Version as at April, 1994**

	Curriculum Studies		Practicum		Academic Studies		General Studies		Professional Studies	
	Primary Curriculum & Teaching	2	***School Experience:***		Chinese	10	Life Skills	2	***Some examples of curriculum elements:***	
	Chinese	2	1st semester: 2 weeks	C	Mathematics	3	Art / Music / P.E.	2	Introductory Module	
C	Mathematics	2	2nd, 3rd & 4th Semester: 4 weeks		Science	3	*Putonghua	2	Human Development: Childhood & Adolescence	
	General Studies	2	total = 385 hrs		Culture & Society (HK Studies)	3	(compulsory)	6	Developing & Maintaining Productive Human Relationship in Schools	
	Personal Social & Health Education	2	(5.5 days per wk; 5 hrs per day)		Human Dynamics	3	(*Students may take other modules in lieu)		Fundamental Principles of Education	
	Science				English		Life Skills	2	Learning and Teaching	
	Social Studies		***Practicum Seminar:***		Putonghua		Art / Music / P.E.	2	Classroom Teaching Skills	
	English	2	3 hrs/week: 3x30x2 = 180 hrs	S	P.E.	3	Putonghua	2	Designing & Developing Instructional Media	
S	Putonghua				Music		English	4	Instructional Design & Strategies for Effective Teaching	
	P.E.				Arts & Crafts		Computer Applications	2	*Seminars & Talks (20 hrs)*	
	Music				Computer in Education		(4 more c.p. from the above)	4		
	Arts & Crafts				Advanced Studies	6				
	Computer Across the Curriculum									
	Credit points	12				31		10		16
	Total hours	180	565			465		150		260

Total Number of Credit Points for a 2-year Teacher Certificate (Primary) Course: 12+31+10+16 = 69 credit points Total=1620 hours

C: core S: Subject of student's own choice

Appendix

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